SYNOPSIS

PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CONCEPT OF FOUR YOGAS

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1. **INTRODUCTION** :

In the Indian Hindu system the term 'YOGA' has a broad connotation .In one of its senses it refers to the paths that can lead the human soul to the ultimate divine reality. Broadly four kinds of path are recognized by the Hindus i.e - The path of intellect (Jnana Yoga),The path of devotion (Bhakti Yoga),The path of action (Karma Yoga),The path of physical discipline (Raj Yoga) respectively traditionally each of these Yogas considered to be suitable for people of different and specific temperament and each spiritual seeker was expected to take up any one of these Yogas according to their tastes and needs for their ultimate spiritual fulfillment. For example, the person of emotion would be naturally inclined to Bhakti Yoga whereas a person of action would be find Karma Yoga move suitable for his or her temperament. Based on the uniqueness of each path of yoga a body of scriptures, rights and practices had developed its system making each system a complete and wholesome path to follow.

In modern times it was Swami Vivekananda who gave a different view about the efficacy and impact of each system on the life of a seeker. Consequently he had prescribed a synthesis of the four yoga in the life of any individual seeker for his or her all round development.

If we study the lectures of Vivekananda we will find that he has lectured on each yoga separately on various occasions so much so that when talks on Jnana Yoga he is so convincing in his thesis that we take him to be fully inclined to the path of Jnana Yoga , when he speak of bhakti , we take him to be a Bhakta per excellence, when he speak of action, he seems to be a ultimate Karma Yogi and again he prescribed Raj Yoga, he seems to an adept in Yogik disciplines.

In spite of these usually in India ,Vivekananda is considered to be modern profounder of Karma yoga, the path of action and his philosophy “SHIV JNANE JIVA SHEBA” is considered to be his special contribution for the spiritual practice of the modern age . However interestingly when Vivekananda established Ramkrishna Math and Mission the spiritual goal as reflected in its emblem that he designed for the organization was not simply of Karma yoga but a combination and balance of four existing Yogas by the harmony of which the swan-atman manifest itself.

Moreover, in his intimate talks to his disciples, Vivekananda often express the view the modern perfect human being should have all their faculties fully developed. The modern man

would be someone who has sharpest intellect combined with an eternally sympathetic heart who would be extremely active in his life and yet would be able to enter into a deep state of calmness whenever needed. Vivekananda often expressed the view that intense action

Combined with complete calmness is the requirement from modern human. That is why Vivekananda once said “IRON NERVES WITH A WELL INTELLIGENT BRAIN AND THE WHOLE WORLD IS AT YOUR FEET”. He also prescribed 3H formula for the modern perfect human being. Here 3H means HEAD, HEART, and HAND. According to Vivekananda, modern human being should have all the 3Hs.

From the above discussion it can be said that Vivekananda was the first hindu who strongly prescribed a combination of the four yogas in human life, where he tried to preserve the positive aspects of each path and curb the negative inherent in each of them.

Interestingly when we talk of synthesis of yoga or integral yoga the first name that comes to our mind is that of Shri Aurobindo. All important and scholarly discussion regarding the synthesis of the four are connected to the work and philosophy of Rishi .Aurobindo’s contribution in this regard cannot undermind but at the same time the prescription of Vivekananda who talked about the synthesis on yoga prior to Aurobindo should be discussed with equal important . Unfortunately I have found only one or two books wriiten by swamis of the order in this regard and almost know scholarly discussion in this matter from any other circle.I think that there is much scope throw light on this aspect of Vivekananda thought which will bring Vivekananda’s philosophy of life in sharper focus and illuminate this much needed aspect of this thought.Therefore I have taken up this topic “PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA’S CONCEPT OF FOUR YOGAS “as the subject matter of my thesis.

2. **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY** :

My thesis titled "SYNTHESIS OF THE FOUR YOGAS :SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PERSPECTIVE" is attempt to study the contribution of Swami Vivekananda to the field of synthesis of Yogas in the system of India Philosophy .The primary purpose of the thesis is to find out the inter relation among four yogas i.e – Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga , Karma Yoga , Raj Yoga. This thesis also studies the uniqueness of the four yogas.In viewof fulfillimg this point ,the thesis locates the following :

a) Different meaning of the word 'YOGA'.
b) The historical background of the origin and development of Yoga.
c) Differences between traditional concept of yoga and Vivekananda concept of yoga.
d) Significance of different types of Yoga described by Swami Vivekananda.
e) Final destination of the four yoga.
f) To describe how the four yogas unites and relate to each other in their ultimate aim.

3. CONTENT :

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) was one of the most towering personality of the 19th century who redefined our outlook about human nature and society. Vivekananda's masterful speech was a source of optimism and inspiration for the advancement of human fulfillment and emancipation .Vivekananda was revolutionary in his thought process who pioneered a radical modification based on ancient Indian and brought about a newer vision relevant for modern humanity.

Swami Vivekananda was an ardent spiritual thinker who believed that all soul are potentially divine. He agreed with the Advaita view that due to ignorance we cannot know that divinity of human .To Vivekananda, anyone can be liberated from this ignorance .Now the question arises how one person can realize the divinity? What is the process?

According to Vivekananda, this process can be described in one word and that is YOGA. Again question arises that what is yoga? This word normally is associated with two kinds of

meaning. It may mean union with the divine reality or it may stand for the of disciplines relevant to reach this union.

In Vedic Sanskrit, 'YOGA' (from the root word 'yuj') meaning "to add","to join",'to unite" or "to attach". YOGASUTRA gives us a technical meaning of it. That is the "union with the supreme" through performance of duties in everyday life.

But Vivekananda used the term in a very broad manner that is why he incorporates both of these meanings in his sense of the term 'YOGA'. Like Hindu spiritual system Vivekananda also recognize four yoga. The yogas are following:

THE WAY OF KNOWLEDGE (Jnana yoga):-

Shri Sankararacharya is the first person who clearly mention the basic thing about the way pf knowledge. The basic thing of the way of intellect is the realization of the oneness, of perfect unity. Sankara's insistence on the importance of jnana yoga as the means to the attainment of Brahma-realization. It is based on a very simple but profound truth with which we are familiar in our day to day experience. But it was given to a great mastermind like Sankara to evolve from it a theory of great metaphysical significance taking his stand on the authority of Upanisads. Like Upanisads Sankara tried to established "TAT TVAM ASI" .It is the main subject matter of sankara's conception of the way of knowledge. Sankara's contention that Jnanayoga is the direct means to the attainment of Brahma-realization. According to him, due to ignorance we cannot gain the knowledge of the real thing. Sankara described Maya as ignorance by which we cannot distinguish real object from unreal object. To Sankara it is Maya .Jnanayoga leads the devotee to experience of unity with God directly by dissolving the veils of ignorance. Sankara summarized the fundamental principle of Jnanayoga into three concise sentences. These are following:

"BRAHMA SATYAM.JAGAT MITHYA.JIVO BRAHMAIVA NA PARAH"(GOD IS ONLY REAL.THE WORLD IS FALSE.THE INDIVIDUAL IS NONE OTHER THAN GOD)

THE WAY OF DEVOTION (Bhakti yoga) :-

Bhakti yoga is a spiritual path or practice within Hinduism focused on the cultivation of love and devotion toward God .It has been defined as a practice of God,solely motivated by the sincere, loving to please God, rather than the hope of divine punishment. It is a means forward a state of spiritual liberation or enlightment through the "realization",or the attainment of oneness with God.Bhaktiyoga is often considered by Hindus to be the easiest way of ordinary people to attain such a spiritually liberated state because although it is form of yoga .Its practice is not as rigorous as most other yogik schools and it is possible to practice Bhaktiyoga without needing to become a full time yogi. The origin of Bhakti can be seen in the Upanisads, specifically Shvetasahvatara Upanisad, Bhagvad Gita and the Purans are important scriptures that expound

the philosophy of Bhaktiyoga. Hindu movements in which Bhaktiyoga is the main practices are called as BHAKTI MOVEMENT. The major school of which are Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Shakti.

THE WAY OF ACTION(Karmayoga):-

Karmayoga basically consists of entirely selfless service in which the ego is given up to the desire t serve the divinity in everything ,be it man, animal, plant ,or inanimate object. Karma means action including all acts done by the individual from birth to death. One who is not attach to his actions and performs because they are unavoidable, performs action with disinterested interest and does not adopt wrong means. Karma performed by right means does not harm anybody and is in accordance with the law of Dharma. It is Karmayoga. Karmayoga is an expression of divine love of the unity of everything. It means to help, heal, and share. Lord Krishna tells us the basic thing of karmayoga in Gita. "KARMANYE VADHIKARASTE MA PHALESU KADACHANA MA KARMA-PHALA-HETUR BHUR MA TE SANGO'STVAKARMANI"(BHAGVADGITA,CHAPTER TWO,VERSE 47).(YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO PERFORM YOUR PRESCRIBED DUTY,BUT YOU ARE NOT ENTITLED TO THE FRUITS OF ACTION.NEVER CONSIDER YOURSELF AS THE CAUSE OF THE RESULT OF YOUR ACTIVITY AND NEVER BE ATTACHED TO NOT DOING YOUR DUTY)

THE WAY OF PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE (Rajyoga):-

Rajyoga is the way of realizing the oneness by controlling the mind and body. It was propounded by Patanjali in his "YOGASUTRA".Rajyoga is also known as Asthangayoga (Eight steps of yoga).Because it is organized in eight parts. This paths are following:

Yama (Self control)

Niyama (Discipline)

Asana (physical posture)

Pranayam (Breathing control)

Pratyahar (Withdrawal of the senses from external object)

Dharana (Concentration)

Dhayan (Meditation)

Samadhi (complete ralsation)

‘RAJA’ means king who acts with independence, Self Confidence and assurance. Likewise a Raj yogi is autonomous, independent and fearless. Raj yoga is the path of Self Discipline.

4. THE RESEARCH ISSUES:

(a) There are different kind of meaning of the term ‘YOGA’. In what sense, Vivekananda understood the term ‘YOGA’?

(b) What is the perspective of Vivekananda regarding the nature of the four Yogas?

(c) What is the basic ground of the four Yogas described by Vivekananda?

(d) Both Sankara and Vivekananda described ‘MAYA’. Is there any difference among them about the concept the ‘MAYA’?

(e) What is the relation between attachment, maya, and action?

(f) Is there any connection between jyana (knowledge) and bhakti (devotion)? If yes, what kind of connection is? And how both of them connected to each other?

(j) What is the problem for the yoginas who follow the path which prescribed by Vivekananda?

(k) How the problem would be solved?

(l) What is the role of “perfect human being” who realize that oneness by the ways describe by Vivekananda?

(m) How the four ways makes a human being as ‘perfect human being’?

(n) How does Vivekananda modify the traditional ways of yoga practices?

(o) What is its relevance in modern human life in general and for Hinduism in particular?

(p) Why the synthesis of yogas is important in our modern life?

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